

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 06058 150825Z

15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01

INT-05 AGR-05 STR-04 CIEP-01 /096 W

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R 150631Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1489

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 6058

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CH, KN, US

SUBJ: SENIOR GOM MINISTER TO PEKING, PYONGYANG AND SEOUL

1. GOM MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, ABDUL GHAFAR BABA, THE THIRD RANKING MEMBER OF MALAYSIAN CABINET IS CURRENTLY OFF ON A TOUR WHICH WILL TAKE HIM TO PEKING (OCT 17-24), PYONGYANG (OCT 14-17) AND SEOUL (OCT 24-29). MALAYSIAN PRESS COVERAGE OF VISIT HAS EMPHASIZED BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND OTHER THREE COUNTRIES, BUT CAREFUL BALANCING OF VISITS TO PYONGYANG AND SEOUL IS INDICATION OF GOM'S DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN NEUTRAL POSITION BETWEEN TWO KOREAS.

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PAGE 02 KUALA 06058 150825Z

2. GHAFAR EXPECTED TO CALL ON PRC MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY, SHA FENG, AS WELL AS OTHER CHINESE LEADERS. HE MENTIONED HOPES OF INCREASING PRC PURCHASES OF MALAYSIAN NATURAL RUBBER, SAWN TIMBER AND PALM OIL IN A PRE-DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT MENTION TIN, INCREASED PRC EXPORTS OF TIN HAVE RECENTLY BEEN A MATTER OF CONCERN TO GOM OFFICIALS AND THIS MAY BE ANOTHER TOPIC OF DISCUSSION.

3. GHAFAR SAID HE WAS INTERESTED IN EXPLORING NEW TRADE OPPORTUNITIES WITH NORTH KOREA INCLUDING THE BUYING OF LIGHT FARM MACHINERY. GHAFAR INTENDS TO STUDY PROGRESS IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN SOUTH KOREA AND "DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF SETTING UP JOINT VENTURES FOR DEEP SEA FISHING IN MALAYSIAN WATERS." (FYI: FONMIN OFFICIAL TOLD US THERE WERE NO OBJECTIONS BY NORTH KOREANS TO COMBINING NORTH KOREAN-SOUTH KOREAN VISITS IN ONE TRIP. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS CONTRASTS WITH PAST PYONGYANG BEHAVIOR.)

4. GHAFAR NORMALLY PLAYS NO ROLE IN GOM FOREIGN POLICY DETERMINATION, ALTHOUGH HE DOES HOLD HONORIFIC POSITION AS PRESIDENT OF MALAYSIAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY. THIS TRIP MAY BE ATTEMPT TO BOOST HIS IMAGE AND GIVE HIM APPEARANCE OF EXPERTISE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THIS IS FIRST MINISTERIAL LEVEL VISIT TO PEKING SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS IN MAY, AND GOM APPARENTLY DISCOURAGED SOME MALAYSIAN CHINESE CABINET MEMBERS WHO WERE REPORTEDLY ANXIOUS TO MAKE OFFICIAL VISITS. GHAFAR WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY FONMIN OFFICIAL MOHD. TAKWIR BIN HAJI MOHD. DIN, AND HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY ABDUL AZIZ RAOF.  
UNDERHILL

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